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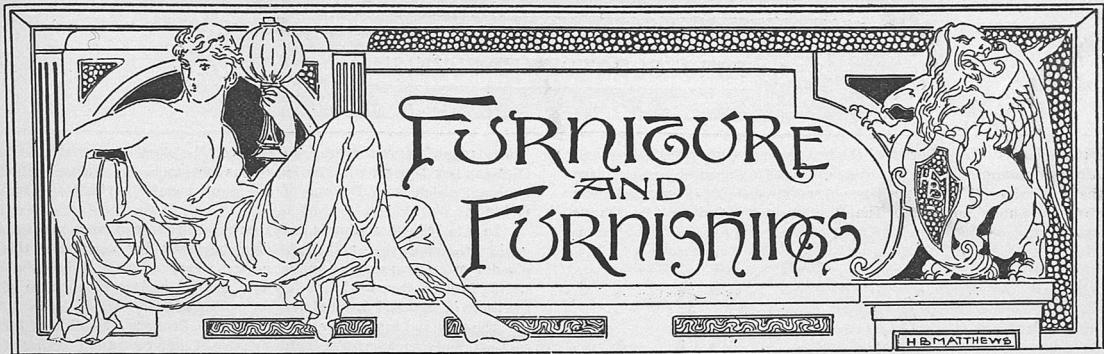
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SEVENTH SEMI-ANNUAL FURNITURE EXHIBITION.



T HAS been our frequent pleasure during the past few years to introduce to our readers some of the artistic productions shown by many celebrated American furniture manufacturers at the semi-annual exhibitions held in this city, and once more we have an opportunity of examining the tasteful labors of these firms, which our readers may well regard as an exceptional privilege.

These exhibitions are established solely for trade purposes, and the public being rigidly excluded, there naturally exists a curiosity to see the many gems of the cabinet maker's art brought together in the Industrial Building, from the most widely scattered manufacturing centers, all typical of widely diversified fashions that simultaneously exist in this country, by means of which our national artistic character is being rapidly developed.

It has often been asked among architects and designers, how it is that there is nowadays no determined attempt to create distinctive American style. Why, say many patriotic and cultured people, why cannot we, with all our unparalleled opportunities and encouragement, invent a style of art which shall be proudly handed down to posterity as the "Occidental?" Why should we not introduce, at the end of this century, a style of art at least as beautiful as that which lent such a charm to the Napoleonic period in France? Why cannot we create a new mode as dainty and sympathetic as that which marked the culmination and decline of the French Renaissance at the terrible close of the eighteenth century? Why? Because of international friendliness by reason of the facilities of speedy traveling, the increase of general learning, and the gradual drifting of wealth and power from the plutocrat to the democrat, have given us unprecedented opportunities of indulging a diversified and restless taste. Our modern commerce brings, in cheap plenty, to our very doors examples of foreign art which a century or two ago were rarely if ever seen, even by wealthy folk. All these causes are, unfortunately, alluring us to lazily indulge ourselves with a luxurious and chaotic *rêchauffé* of all that the past ages have invented, and all that distant and old-fashioned nations have still to show us as quaint and novel. Thus there is now all over the world an irresistible and absolute decay of distinctly national fashions. Paris is but a few hours' journey from here, Rome but a couple of days away, while China, Egypt, Mexico and Timbuctoo are fast becoming holiday haunts of the cheap excursionist. This proximity to the Metropolis of the world, that is to say, New York; of erstwhile distant climes, is fast destroying national fashions. The Khedive's palace is largely furnished in the French style with flowered silks, huge mirrors, and gilded furniture. The Mikado's home is absolutely European in its appointments. The Rajahs and Nizams of Hindostan have for many years seared their natural tastefulness in order to indulge a vanity for glass chandeliers

and the ugly English furniture of the cabriole type. As a matter of fact, the upper classes in every land have been neglecting their traditional art and conforming their taste to European ideas, whilst Europeans have been hurrying on from one old fashion to another, gathering a little inspiration here, and there producing many transient modes, but nowhere laying the foundation of a distinctive style embodying the spirit of the time we live in.

In the United States the prevailing styles are inspired by similar styles prevalent in Europe, by embodying in their expression, in many cases, of the national character, and peculiar conditions of existence now prevalent. The busy American is avaricious of time; has no regard for tradition when it comes to a question of saving him labor or trouble. Many ingenious ideas are the outcome of the occidental spirit.

The carpet sweeper is a vast improvement on the time honored broom, and the roll-top desk is the *ne plus ultra* of business requirements. Combination furniture is the outcome of flats, born of the congested life of our large cities. But these things are away down in the scale of art furnishings, yet the spirit that animates them is gradually creeping upward until the day will come when no American manufacturer will offer for sale "absolutely correct reproductions" of foreign furniture, however artistic, or historic. Americans have been styled in Europe "the great art furnishers of the future." Let us hope our manufacturers will prove worthy of their high destiny.

C. H. MEDICUS & CO.

THIS well-known firm gives a fine exposition of the adaptability of the French and English eighteenth century styles to American requirements. It consists of delicate and highly artistic parlor suites in the Louis XIV., Louis XV., Louis XVI. and Empire styles, and suites in the Sheraton-Chippendale styles, in both



HAMLET CHAIR, BY C. H. MEDICUS & CO.

carved and inlaid mahogany and carved gilt frames beautifully upholstered in charming silk brocade. In the Empire work, marquetry is substituted for brass enrichment, by reason of its greater comfort and for the greater ease of cleaning the furniture.

What constitutes one of the chief attractions of the exhibit is a four-piece suite in Chippendale and Sheraton lines; one of the pieces being a rocker. This kind of suite will prove extremely popular. There is also shown an extremely fine line of mahogany rockers, purely American in style, whose brilliantly polished mahogany backs are discreetly decorated with marquetry designs to suit the style of panel decorated. The firm make a large line of Morris chairs, club easy chairs, and a big line of dining chairs. The display is in charge of Mr. H. Wertheimer, Jr., who was formerly with the Palmer & Embury Mfg. Co., a gentleman very well informed as to modern fine furnishings.

THE WILLIAMSPORT FURNITURE CO.

TO the general public, the difference between good and bad bedsteads is hardly perceptible, and the wretched structures which are palmed off upon the unsuspecting public, in consequence, are all too